



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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McGinn, Larsson goals lift Sabres to comeback 4-2 win over slumping Canadiens

By Bill Beacon
Canadian Press
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MONTREAL - Secondary scoring was the key as the Buffalo Sabres became the latest team to topple the crumbling Montreal Canadiens.

Marcus Foligno opened the scoring with his fourth of the season and Johan Larsson got the game-winner with only his second in 48 games as the Sabres downed the Canadiens 4-2 on Wednesday night.

"It plays a big role in our wins when we get that secondary scoring going," said Buffalo captain Brian Gionta. "Foligno early on, Larsson with a big one to go ahead. Stuff like that is key."

Gionta had an empty-net goal with 13 seconds left to play and Jamie McGinn also scored for the Sabres (21-26-4), who moved out of last place in the Atlantic Division, one point ahead of Toronto, which holds two games in hand.

Buffalo, after its first game since the all-star break, is 6-4-0 in its last 10 games.

They trailed 2-1 going into the third period, but outskated Montreal the rest of the way.

"We just stuck with it," said McGinn. "We stayed positive.

"We got shots to the net and fortunately we found the back of the net."

The Sabres' third period outburst, aided by poor defending by the Canadiens, had the Bell Centre crowd booing. The Canadiens were coming off a 4-2 loss Tuesday night in Philadelphia, so fatigue may have been a factor, but they were in no mood for excuses.

The Canadiens opened the season on a 19-4-3 tear but are 5-20-1 since then and have fallen out of the playoff picture.

Dale Weise and Alex Galchenyuk scored for Montreal (24-2-44), which has lost four in a row and is 1-8-1 in its last 10.

"I don't know what to say," said Weise. "It's the same thing every game.

"We made a lot of turnovers. There's no excuse for that. But we've got to find a way."

Weise said he understands that fans who thought the Canadiens would contend for a Stanley Cup this season grow angrier with each loss as the team struggles without injured star goalie Carey Price.

"We feel bad for them," said Weise. "We're laying it on the line out there.

"It's not from a lack of effort. The fans pay a lot of money to come and watch games and we respect them if they want to boo or not. That's their prerogative. But we're trying our best out there."

Montreal outshot the Sabres 35-32.

Buffalo scored on its first shot as Zemgus Girgensons stole a puck from Jeff Petry and fed it in front to a wide open Foligno at 5:10.

Weise tied it on a power play 3:19 into the second when he was at the edge of the crease to take a feed from Max Pacioretty and tap in his 12th of the season.

Tomas Plekanec won a faceoff and Galchenyuk wove his way in from the boards to beat Robin Lehner with a backhand shot at 11:04.

McGinn tied it 2-2 on a power play 7:34 into the third period when he was at the edge of the crease to tip in a diagonal feed from Rasmus Ristolainen.

Larsson got between two defencemen to tip a Jake McCabe feed past Mike Condon at 11:46.

Notes — Normally, the first home game of February sees the Canadiens award a player of the month honour for January. But three players tied for top spot — Lars Eller, Brendan Gallagher and Max Pacioretty — and tie-breaking system couldn't settle it, so their points will carry over to next month. That they went 3-7-1 in January meant fewer than usual stars were awarded.

Sabres' Reinhart grows in the shadow of fellow second overall pick Eichel

By Bill Beacon
Canadian Press
February 4, 2016

MONTREAL - Playing in the shadow of the gifted Jack Eichel may be a good thing for Buffalo Sabres winger Sam Reinhart.

Even though both were second-overall draft picks — Reinhart in 2014 behind Florida's Aaron Ekblad and Eichel in 2015 behind Edmonton phenom Connor McDavid — it is Eichel who is drawing most of the attention in the first full NHL season for both players.

"I think Sam's had the benefit of going under the radar a bit," coach Dan Bylsma said Wednesday as the Sabres prepared to face the Montreal Canadiens. "There hasn't been a big story about Sam.

"We've seen him really improve his game and come out to score what could be 20 or 23 goals, which would be a pretty darn good season for anybody. It doesn't have the dramatic story or the spotlight, but he's turned into a big part of our team and the scoring on our team."

The 2014 draft didn't have quite the hype of the one last June, which had two potential superstars up for grabs. The Sabres had a brutal season that had all the look of tanking to finish last and get the best shot at the first overall pick, only to see Edmonton win the draft lottery and pick McDavid.

The Sabres immediately said they were just as pleased to get the six-foot-two 200-pound Eichel.

So far, Eichel has 16 goals and 34 points in 50 games for Buffalo and has shown flashes of brilliance. McDavid, who missed most of the season with a collarbone injury, has six goals and 15 points in 14 games — including three points against Columbus on his return to the lineup on Tuesday night.

Reinhart has 12 goals and eight assists in 47 games, playing mainly on a line with team scoring leader Ryan O'Reilly.

Bylsma feels Reinhart has become a key piece of the team's attack, who "surprisingly enough, is our best net-front guy."

Reinhart played nine games for Buffalo last season, picking up one assist, before he was returned to the junior Kootenay Ice. He also won gold and led the world junior championship in scoring on a Canadian team that included a 17-year-old McDavid.

Reinhart doesn't buy into the notion he is doing better because Eichel is taking the heat.

"We're good friends, so to go through the same thing helps," he said.

He feels what helped most is that the Sabres are on the way back up after a few years of spiralling downward.

"It's a different year," he said. "The team's a lot closer.

"The mood going in after a win or a loss is different and better. It's a better atmosphere all around."

The Sabres are still last in the Atlantic Division, but the future looks brighter with a core of young talent that includes Reinhart, Eichel, O'Reilly, Evander Kane, Zemgus Girgensons and Rasmus Ristolainen.

"I think we're taking strides," said veteran defenceman Josh Gorges. "It's something to keep building on and be excited about.

"You need a group that respects each other and plays hard for each other and I think we have that. We're in the process of learning how to be a top tier team."

He feels having Eichel and Reinhart together as rookies is mutually beneficial.

"They can go through these situations together — wins, losses, media, public perception," he said. "They're not on an island.

"They've got someone in the same boat. I think they've helped each other. They're both phenomenal players. It's exciting for both of them."

Reinhart, Gorges and Nicolas Deslauriers were all to return to the lineup Wednesday after missing time with injuries.

Bruins-Sabres Preview

By Kevin Massoth

AP

February 4, 2016

Road success helped the Boston Bruins work back into the thick of the Eastern Conference race prior to the All-Star break, and that's where they will have to steady themselves following a disappointing homestand.

The Bruins start a road-heavy stretch on Thursday night by opening a home-and-home set against the Buffalo Sabres.

Boston (26-18-6) ended a miserable 2-7-1 stretch with a 4-1 win at Buffalo on Jan. 15, snapping a two-game skid against its Atlantic Division foe. That opened a 5-1 spurt for the Bruins with three victories coming in as many road games.

But just as they started to trend upward again, the Bruins dropped home games on each side of the All-Star break. Tuesday's 4-3 overtime loss to Toronto was especially bitter after Brad Marchand and David Krejci scored 26 seconds apart early in the third period before Boston gave up a pair later in the third.

"It's called focus," coach Claude Julien told the team's official website following Wednesday's practice. "We kind of lose track of that at times, and get away from things that we used to do well to make us successful."

The Bruins rank third in the NHL with 2.94 goals per game, a number they feel should give them plenty of chances to win. However, they have surrendered 10 in their back-to-back losses, exposing a defense that has allowed an average of 2.94 in 17 games since Dec. 26.

The Maple Leafs scored three of their four goals with tips in front of the net.

After hosting Buffalo on Saturday and Los Angeles on Tuesday, the Bruins embark on a season-high six-game road trip that will last 10 days. The Bruins are 15-5-3 away from home while outscoring their opponents 72-49.

"Fortunately for us, we've had more success on the road (than at home)," Julien said.

It's a similar story for Buffalo (21-26-4), which is 9-15-2 at First Niagara Center. Since winning 6-3 at Boston on Dec. 26, the Sabres are 6-10 overall with losses in six of seven home games.

However, they earned wins on the final two stops of their three-game road trip after rallying for Wednesday's 4-2 victory at Montreal. Buffalo trailed 2-1 entering the third period but Jamie McGinn and Johan Larsson scored before an empty-netter from Brian Gionta sealed it.

"We just stuck with it," McGinn said. "We stayed positive. We got shots to the net and fortunately we found the back of the net."

It's been difficult for opponents to do just that against Robin Lehner, who has a .939 save percentage in five starts since returning from an ankle injury. But Chad Johnson might get the call against his former team in the second of back-to-back games.

Johnson, who made 27 appearances with Boston in 2013-14, surrendered five goals in a 6-3 loss at the New York Rangers on Jan. 25. He earned the win after making 30 saves in the Dec. 26 matchup in Boston, improving to 2-1 against the Bruins with a .931 save percentage.

Jonas Gustavsson started for Boston in each of this season's first two games against the Sabres, but he was pulled from his last start due to an elevated heart rate. Tuukka Rask has just a 3.26 goals-against average and .899 save percentage in his last four starts, though he has won his last three against Buffalo with a 1.65 GAA.

Larsson's the driving force in victory by Sabres

By Amy Moritz
Buffalo News
February 4, 2016

MONTREAL – Johan Larsson has just two goals on the season. They just both happen to be game-winners on the road for the Buffalo Sabres.

The forward drove the net, put his stick on the ice and tipped in a shot from Jake McCabe to put the Sabres up for good in a 4-2 win over the Montreal Canadiens at Bell Centre on Wednesday night.

Larsson, who scored the game-winner in Detroit on Dec. 14, has had plenty of opportunities but hasn't been able to cash in.

This time, he did.

"I just tried to drive the net and get my stick on the ice," Larsson said. "It hit my stick and went in. It was good feeling. You always want to score so I try to go the net and get an easy goal."

"Larsson's been playing in a match-up role for us, playing on a line for us that's playing against other team's best players and he's done a good job doing it," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "He just hasn't been able to find the score sheet. I think tonight he was rewarded for that. Nice to see him get it and get it the right way – going to the net and being strong on his stick."

Larsson might not be the first pick for a Sabres goal. Nor would Marcus Foligno. But both scored at key times as Buffalo won its second straight game.

"They work hard day in, day out so it's good to see them get around the net and the puck hit the back of the net," Sabres forward Jamie McGinn said of Larsson and Foligno. "They deserve it because they're working hard in practice. It's good to see."

The Canadiens started the game strong, recording the first six shots while the Sabres looked like a team a bit rusty from the All-Star break.

It was Foligno who helped shake the rust off the Sabres. Playing with his new linemates – Jack Eichel and Zemgus Girgensons – Foligno knew he had to make a strong first impression to stay on that line.

Just over five minutes into the game, he had the perfect opportunity. Foligno drove to the net and was all alone in front of Montreal's Mike Condon. He called to Girgensons, who delivered him the puck. Foligno made no mistake and buried his opportunity for his fourth goal of the season and a 1-0 Sabres lead.

"I think it was the best way to start it, to get a goal right away," Foligno said of the new line combination. "It kind of settled me in and got fire underneath it. I thought it was good. We played a pretty good game, our line and it was fun playing with Jack and Zemgus."

But that 1-0 lead evaporated in the second. Montreal cashed in twice – first a power play goal from Dale Weise then an incredible individual effort from Alex Galchenyuk.

The Canadiens came into Wednesday on a four-game home losing streak and had dropped their last three overall. The Sabres know what it's like to be vulnerable.

"We didn't like our second so we came out pretty hungry in the third," Foligno said. "We knew that's a fragile team over there right now and we've been there, too, when things seem to not go your way all the time. You've

got to keep on them, stay on them and they find a way to lose. That was good third period by us. I thought we had a lot of good puck pressure and line rushes and obviously a big power play goal to tie the game.”

It was McGinn who came through on the power play, tipping in a shot from Rasmus Ristolainen to tie the game at 7:34 of the third and give the Sabres new life after a disappointing second period.

“I think we just stuck with it,” McGinn said. “You’ve got to keep going forward. We put pucks behind them and we didn’t get frustrated with ourselves. We stayed positive. We just had to continue to get shots to the net and fortunately they started hitting the back of the net and it was a huge win for us.”

Brian Gionta added an empty net goal with 13 seconds left to seal the win for the Sabres.

Sabres notebook: Reinhart quietly having a solid season

By Amy Moritz
Buffalo News
February 4, 2016

MONTREAL – The media scrum is around Jack Eichel. It's always around Jack Eichel. With good reason. He entered Wednesday night's game against the Montreal Canadiens at the Bell Centre second in rookie points with 34. The All-American college hockey kid has created some dazzling highlights and filled reporters' notebooks with his thoughts about his first year as a pro hockey player.

While Eichel gets the spotlight, Sam Reinhart quietly goes to work. The other rookie forward for the Sabres has been putting together his own special season. Part of that may benefit from Eichel taking the lion's share of attention.

"I think he's had the benefit of going under the radar a little bit," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said Wednesday after his team's morning skate. "There wasn't a big story about Sam. There hasn't been a big story about Sam. We've seen him really improve his game. He's on pace to score what could be 20-23 goals.

That would "end up being a pretty darn good season for anybody, scoring that many goals," Bylsma said. "And I think he's done it under the radar. Doesn't have the dramatic story. Doesn't have the spotlight but turning into a big part of our team and a big part of scoring on our team."

Reinhart returned to the Sabres lineup after missing three games with an injury.

Coupled with the All-Star break, the 20-year old was chomping at the bit to get back on the ice.

"It seems like I haven't been around the guys in quite some time," Reinhart said. "It's nice to get back into it. ... I feel like I'm at my best right now even though I'm just coming back from a little bit of time off. I've been itching to get back for a while now."

Reinhart's return reunites him with Ryan O'Reilly. Bylsma likes to find combinations of pairs to build his lines around and while Reinhart's work, especially in front of the net on the power play, will help generate some offense for the Sabres, his work with O'Reilly should help get the veteran back in the points column as well.

"They've been a pair and a duo for most of this year and I think Ryan's kind of been with different pairs, different lines the last five or six games. It's been a factor for him and his play," said Bylsma as O'Reilly has gone nine games without a goal. "I think getting Sam back there will be a big help to Ryan's line and for Sam ... where he's been his best since the start of the season for us has been the net front. He's been our best net-front guy and that shows up largely on the power play where he can get back in there and be effective for us."

Reinhart, who entered the game with 10 of his 12 goals on the road, said he loves playing with O'Reilly.

"He's so smart," Reinhart said of O'Reilly. "I feel if I play fast and get myself in the right position, he's going to find me. I owe a lot of my progression this year to playing with him and working with him."

The compliments are mutual.

"He's a smart player that can improve any lineup," O'Reilly said of Reinhart. "He's a guy that's very versatile and can play with anyone. You can find chemistry with him because he's so smart. He sees the game so well that for me it's a pleasure to play with. He's always in the right area. He supports the puck in the right spots. He finds openings. He creates."

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The Sabres are looking for a punch to their offense. That won't likely come from Nicolas Deslauriers. The fourth-liner returned to the lineup after he broke his foot blocking a shot on Jan. 2. That's the kind of play he makes – the hard-nosed hockey play.

He has three goals this season but his passion for the game and his ability to make life miserable for the other team is an important intangible to the Sabres' bench.

"We definitely need it. The passion and intensity he plays with, it's tough to play against," O'Reilly said. "I know first-hand playing against him, you're always looking over your shoulder. 'Where is he?' He finishes every check. There's never an easy shift he gives other teams. That's something that will wear a team down."

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His teammates call Marcus Foligno "Moose" and inspired by that, the Sabres will be selling Marcus Moose stuffed toys at Thursday's game. The stuffed moose is \$25 and proceeds will benefit SABAH. The stuffed animal also comes with an autographed Marcus Foligno trading card. They will be for sale in both wings of the 100 Level pavilion starting at 5 p.m. while supplies last. Any remaining will be available at 10 a.m. Friday at the Sabres store.

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The Buffalo Sabres and Roswell Park Cancer Institute announced a collaboration called "One Goal: Inspire Cancer Cures" to run over the next five seasons. The initiative includes a broad-based educational campaign to give fans guidance on cancer risk, prevention and research. Roswell Park will provide tips on cancer prevention, early detection and risk reduction at First Niagara Center. To kick off the program, a free prostate cancer screening event is being planned for March 24 at First Niagara Center.

Quick hits: Sabres 4, Montreal 2

By Amy Moritz
Buffalo News
February 4, 2016

MONTREAL -- A tip-in by Johan Larsson midway through the third period gave the Buffalo Sabres a 4-2 win over the Montreal Canadiens Wednesday night.

The Sabres took a 1-0 lead on a goal from Marcus Foligno in the first period only to watch it slip away in the second as Montreal scored twice for a 2-1 advantage.

It was a power play tip by Jamie McGinn off a shot by Rasmus Ristolainen with 12:26 left in the third that tied the game for the Sabres.

Then Larsson crashed the net as Jake McCabe fired a shot. Larsson was at the top of the crease and tipped the puck in to give the Sabres back the lead with 8:14 left in regulation.

The Sabres added an empty netter with 12.1 seconds remaining to secure the win.

It was the second straight win for the Sabres while the Habs continued their free fall. It was the fifth straight loss at home for Montreal and their fourth straight loss overall.

First goal: The new linemates for Marcus Foligno worked out just fine in the first period. Playing wing with Jack Eichel and Zemgus Girgensons, Foligno went to the net. Nobody followed him and Girgenson's hit him with a pass from the corner. Foligno made no mistake, putting home a wrist shot at 5:10. It was his fourth goal of the season and gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead -- on the team's first shot on goal of the game.

Slow start: The Sabres scored the game's first goal on their first shot. In the first five minutes of the game, it was all Montreal as the Habs had a 6-0 lead in shots. They were, 10-2, in shots at one point with Robin Lehner making some solid saves, including on a tip by Brendan Gallagher in the first minute. Buffalo got its footing while the Habs' confidence sagged and Montreal had just a 12-11 edge in shots after 20 minutes.

Montreal momentum: The Habs regained their confidence at the start of the second thanks to an early power play. Johan Larsson was called for hooking. Josh Gorges saved one goal, tucking the puck back under Lehner. But Montreal made no mistake a few moments later when Max Pacioretty had a perfect pass to an open Dale Weise, alone at the far post. The puck bounced and Weise fired it home to tie the game, 1-1, at 3:19 of the second.

For the lead: With 8:56 left in the second Tomas Plekanec won the faceoff and Alex Galchenyuk took the puck. He then skated toward the corner, changed direction on Ryan O'Reilly by going to his backhand then blew by the Sabres forward toward Lehner and scored for a 2-1 Montreal lead.

Eichel magic: With the secondary assist on McGinn's power play goal, Jack Eichel now has 21 points (seven goals, 14 assists) in his last 19 games.

A shot in every game: Max Pacioretty recorded his first shot of the game in the second period, giving him a shot in every game the Habs have played this season. Pacioretty along with Vancouver's Daniel Sedin are the only NHL players to have that achievement this year, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

Road warriors: The Sabres are now 6-0-1 in their last seven road games against Atlantic Division opponents. It is the first time in franchise history has picked up points in seven straight divisional road games.

Scratches: With eight healthy defensemen the Sabres scratched Mike Weber and Carlo Colaiacovo. The Canadiens scratched defensemen Mark Barberio and Greg Pateryn and forward Lucas Lessio.

Counting the house: The Canadiens have played 481 consecutive home games in front of a sellout crowd. The last time the Habs did not play in front of a sold-out home crowd was Jan. 8, 2004 against Tampa Bay.

Up next: The Sabres return home for their ninth back-to-back of the season, hosting the Boston Bruins at 7 Thursday in First Niagara Center. The Sabres are 4-4-0 in the second game of back-to-backs this season. Buffalo then travels to Boston on Saturday.

Sabres score three in third to defeat Canadiens

By Sean Farrell

NHL.com

February 4, 2016

MONTREAL -- The Buffalo Sabres made the most of the momentum when it swung their way, and the result was yet another disheartening loss for the Montreal Canadiens.

Jamie McGinn, Johan Larsson and Brian Gionta scored in the third period to spark Buffalo to a 4-2 win against Montreal at Bell Centre on Wednesday.

McGinn's power-play goal at 7:34 tied the game 2-2, and Larsson gave the Sabres their second one-goal lead 4:12 later when he redirected Jake McCabe's pass from the left corner past Mike Condon at 11:46.

Gionta, who was the Canadiens' captain from 2010-14, scored into an empty net with 12.1 seconds remaining.

"They made a good push in the second [period]," Gionta said. "Obviously, toward the end, maybe the last five minutes of the first, we were able to take it a little bit to them. So they made a push back in the second to get a couple of goals there on us, but I thought we showed a lot of composure there in the third."

Marcus Foligno scored in the first period and Robin Lehner made 33 saves for Buffalo (21-26-4), which won its second in a row in its first game since the All-Star break.

Dale Weise and Alex Galchenyuk scored in the second period to give Montreal a 2-1 lead.

"We didn't like our second so we came out pretty hungry in the third," Foligno said. "We know that's a fragile team over there right now, and we've been there too, where things seem to not go your way all the time. You've got to keep on them, and stay on them and they find a way to lose. That was a good third period by us. I thought we had a lot of puck pressure and line rushes, and obviously a big power-play goal to tie the game."

Condon made 28 saves for the Canadiens (24-24-4), who have lost four in a row and five straight at home. He made 32 saves in Montreal's 4-2 loss at the Philadelphia Flyers on Tuesday.

The Canadiens are 5-20-1 since starting the season 19-4-3.

"I'm running out of things to say," Montreal captain Max Pacioretty said. "It's the same thing after every game; I'm saying, 'It's a complete letdown.'"

The Canadiens are in 13th place in the Eastern Conference with 52 points, five behind the Pittsburgh Penguins, who hold the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"We are very aware that it is going to be very hard to make the playoffs," Montreal coach Michel Therrien said.

McGinn tied the game when he got open in the slot to redirect defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen's pass from the right point past Condon for his 11th goal. Rookie forward Jack Eichel got the secondary assist on McGinn's goal to extend his point streak to three games. Eichel has three goals and five assists in his past six games.

Larsson put Buffalo ahead to stay with his second of the season by getting to the net in time to convert McCabe's pass.

"We were a little rusty, slow there to start, but we had a break here," Larsson said. "And as the game went on, it was a tight game and we knew we were in it, so in the third we went out and executed."

Montreal had the first six shots on goal in the game before Foligno gave Buffalo a 1-0 lead with his fourth of the season at 5:10 of the first period. He was left unmarked in the low slot, took Zemgus Girgensons' pass from the left corner and beat Condon with a low shot from the edge of the goalmouth.

"They came out strong," McGinn said. "I think they lost [Tuesday] night, and they wanted to come out with some heat in front of their own fans so we did a good job of weathering the storm. [Girgensons] made a great play, hustling and then making the play over to Marcus. That was a huge goal to get us into the game. I think it was the first shot of the game and then the momentum changed and we got our legs under us and the rust came off."

Galchenyuk scored a highlight-reel goal off a faceoff to give Montreal a 2-1 lead at 11:04 of the second period after Weise tied it with a power-play goal at 3:19.

Weise drew Montreal even at 1-1 with his 12th goal. He was parked at the left post and took Pacioretty's pass off his skates before putting the puck into an open left side.

Montreal went ahead 2-1 shortly after Tomas Plekanec won a faceoff in Buffalo's zone. Galchenyuk picked up the puck behind Plekanec and skated toward the left corner before cutting back to the net, slipping the puck between Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly's legs before beating Lehner with a backhand for his 13th goal.

Sabres forwards Sam Reinhart, who screened Condon on McGinn's goal, and Nicolas Deslauriers and defenseman Josh Gorges returned from their respective injuries.

Sabres' Johnson likely to start against Bruins

By John Kreiser
NHL.com
February 4, 2016

BRUINS (26-18-6) at SABRES (21-26-4)

TV: TVA Sports, SNE, SNO, SNP, NESN, MSG-B, NHL.TV

Season series: The Boston Bruins and Buffalo Sabres have split two games, with the road team winning each time. Sabres rookie Jack Eichel, a Boston native, had two goals and two assists in Buffalo's 6-3 win at TD Garden on Dec. 26. Ryan Spooner scored a goal and had two assists in Boston's 4-1 victory at First Niagara Center on Jan. 15.

Bruins team scope: After allowing three goals on tips and deflections in a 4-3 overtime loss to the Toronto Maple Leafs the night before, the Bruins spent practice Wednesday emphasizing play in their own end. "We've got to fix things now, which we're trying to do, and win some hockey games here that are important for us," coach Claude Julien told the Bruins website. Boston brought three goaltenders to Buffalo, with Jonas Gustavsson making the trip along with Tuukka Rask and Malcolm Subban. Gustavsson was removed from a game against the Anaheim Ducks on Jan. 26 for precautionary reasons because of an elevated heart rate. He was cleared to practice Tuesday but won't get clearance to play until the medical staff gets his final test results. Until that happens, Subban will back up Rask.

Sabres team scope: Goaltender Chad Johnson is likely to start in the first of a home-and-home series after Robin Lehner made 33 saves in a 4-2 victory at the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday. The Sabres trailed 2-1 after two periods in Montreal but scored three times, with Johan Larsson's second goal of the season putting them ahead to stay. The victory was Buffalo's fifth this season when trailing after two periods, one behind the League-leading Los Angeles Kings. "As the game went on, it was a tight game and we knew we were in it, so in the third we went out and executed," Larsson said.

Sabres Power Past Canadiens 4-2

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

February 4, 2016

The Sabres scored three unanswered goals in the 3rd, lifting Buffalo to a 4-2 win and sending the Canadiens to their fourth straight loss. Robin Lehner stopped 33 shots in the victory, including 13 in the final period alone.

Goals

- Zemgus Girgensons winged a pass to a wide-open Marcus Foligno in front of the Montreal net. Foligno wristed his shot by Mike Condon for the 1-0 Sabres lead.
- Montreal tied it 3:19 into the 2nd period on a Dale Weise power play goal. Max Pacioretty found Weise alone at the side of the net and a tap-in made it 1-1.
- Alex Galchenyuk put the Canadiens ahead for the first time, spinning away from Ryan O'Reilly and backhanding a shot past Lehner for the 2-1 lead.
- The Sabres struck twice in the 3rd on a pair of tip-ins. With Buffalo on the power play, Jamie McGinn picked up the tying goal, perfectly deflecting Rasmus Ristolainen's pass at 7:34. A little over four minutes later, Larsson tipped home Jake McCabe's pass to the front of the net, putting Buffalo ahead 3-2.
- Brian Gionta sealed it in the final minute, sending the puck all the way down the ice and into the empty Canadiens net for the 4-2 lead.

Game Notes

- Foligno's goal at 5:10 of the 1st period marked Buffalo's first shot on net. The Sabres had been outshot 6-0 at that point.
- With his assist on McGinn's goal, Jack Eichel now has 21 points (7 G, 14 A) in his last 19 games.
- Larsson's go-ahead goal marked his 1st since 12/14/15, snapping a 19-game goalless drought.

What's Next

The Sabres try to make it three straight wins, returning to First Niagara Center on Thursday for the first half of a home and home against the Bruins. Hear the call at 7 p.m. on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

Sabres-Canadiens: From the Locker Room

WGR 550

February 4, 2016

The Sabres shook off a sloppy 2nd period in Montreal on Wednesday before finding the net three times in the final period for a 4-2 win. Jamie McGinn scored the tying goal and Johan Larsson got the winner. Read what both had to say following the game.

Jamie McGinn

"We wanted to come out strong. This is a tough building to win in, their fans are into it, but all the credit to the men in this room right now. We stuck together, we stuck with it and that was a huge win for us."

"[Montreal] came out strong. They lost last night and they wanted to come out with some heat in front of their own fans. We did a good job of weathering the storm...then momentum changed, we got our legs under us and the rust came off."

Johan Larsson

"We were a little rusty and slow there at the start, but we had a break. As the game went on, it was a tight game and we knew we were in it, so in the 3rd period we went out and [executed]."

Dan Bylsma

"Larsson's been playing in a matchup role for us, playing on a line that's playing against other teams' best players and he's done a good job doing it. He just hasn't been able to find the scoresheet. Tonight, he was rewarded for that. It was nice to see him get it and get it the right way, going to the net and being strong on the stick, getting the play from Jake [McCabe]."

"I thought [the Canadiens] came out quick and hard. They came at us and they had some shots and flurries. We helped them out a bit with how we played with the puck, but they had us back on our heels."

Secondary scoring leads Sabres past Canadiens

By Jourdon LaBarber

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MONTREAL – On a night where the Buffalo Sabres needed a jolt at multiple points in the game, two players who had combined for just four goals entering Tuesday night were the ones to provide it.

It might come as a surprise to some that Sabres coach Dan Bylsma had Marcus Foligno and Johan Larsson in mind as players whose offense could help them beat the Montreal Canadiens, but that very well may have been the case.

"We were talking in the coaches' office before the game on where we were going to get our goals," Bylsma said. "Some of those names were mentioned and they came through tonight."

Foligno's fourth goal of the season opened the scoring in the first period and Larsson's second of the year broke a 2-2 tie in the third as the Sabres beat the Canadiens 4-2 for their second win in a row. Jamie McGinn tied the game with a power-play goal and Brian Gionta scored his seventh on an empty net.

Robin Lehner made 33 saves – including a stop on a Max Pacioretty breakaway that could have given Montreal the lead midway through the third period – for his second win of the season.

After exiting the first period with a 1-0 lead thanks to Foligno's goal, the Sabres struggled through the second. Dale Weise scored on the power play to tie the game 3:19 into the period and Alex Galchenyuk scored later to earn a 2-1 advantage.

"Maybe we weren't doing a good job of getting in around the blue paint, but we definitely did that in the third period," McGinn said. "We wanted to come out strong, that's tough building to win in with their fans – they're into it. But all the credit to the men in this room right now. We stuck together."

After the Sabres generated just three shots combined on their first two power-play attempts, it took them just 34 seconds on their third attempt for McGinn to earn the game-tying goal. With Sam Reinhart screening Condon, Rasmus Ristolainen sent a pass from the right circle that McGinn was able to tap into an open net.

"I could tell Risto's a great player and we were making eye contact the whole way so I just had to make sure I had the stick on the ice," McGinn said.

Larsson scored the winner with 8:24 remaining on a good feed from Jake McCabe. After Cody Franson's shot took a long rebound out to McCabe along the boards, the defenseman's pass found Larsson behind the defense in the crease for a tip-in goal.

"Larsson's been playing in a matchup role for us, playing on a line that's playing against other teams' best players," Bylsma said. "He's done a good job doing it; he just hasn't been able to find the score sheet. I think tonight he was rewarded for that, nice to see him get it and get it the right way."

"It was a great feeling," Larsson said. "You always want to score and, yeah, I was just trying to go to the net."

WAKEUP CALL

Bylsma feared that the fact his team hadn't played in nearly a week wouldn't serve them well against a Canadiens team that already played a game coming off the All-Star break. It looked that way early, with Montreal registering the first six shots on goal.

"You're off for five or six days, they're back-to-back, you're going to have some rust," Foligno said. "Just the feeling of the puck again and trying to feel out the speed again and trying to be more patient when you get up to the blue line, but that's all going to come."

It came for Foligno just 5:10 into the contest, when he scored on Buffalo's first shot of the night in large part to a strong play along the wall by new linemate Zemgus Girgensons. Girgensons stripped the puck from Montreal's Jeff Petry and delivered a perfect pass from the corner before taking a hit by an oncoming Alexei Emelin.

The pass found Foligno in alone in front of the net, where he beat Montreal goalie Mike Condon with a wrister to the far side.

"I gave him a yell but, yeah, he knew that I was driving," Foligno said. "He kind of just threw it out there knowing that I would be there and we got it in the back of the net so it was fortunate for us."

SAM REINHART MAKES A BETTER DOOR THAN A WINDOW

Unless you're the Sabres, in which case he can be a window all he wants. Reinhart's net-front presence helped make McGinn's power-play goal possible, with Condon caught leaning to his left to try and see around a Reinhart screen.

"I haven't seen the replay, but Sam's the guy in front of the net with the goalie's eyes," Bylsma said. "The puck comes through kind of the high tip, top of the crease there for Jamie to put in. I know Sam's planted in front of the net, that's where he's been effective for us, and he probably had the goalie's eyes so he couldn't see the pass."

RIGHT BACK AT IT

The Sabres won't have any time to truly bask in the win as their focus shifts to the second leg of their back-to-back set at home against the Boston on Thursday night. The two teams have split a pair of contests this season, with Boston taking their most recent contest on Jan. 15 by a score of 4-1.

Coverage on Thursday begins at 6:30 p.m. with Tops Sabres Gamenight on MSG-B and Sportsnet. Also, make sure to watch between periods to see who wins the first-round matchup between Brian Gionta and Evander Kane in Sabres Showdown.

The game can also be heard live on WGR 550 with puck drop set for 7 p.m.